

97-84064-14

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Averne

The social survey

[Iowa City, Ia.]

[1916]

97-84064-14
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Box 120 McClenahan, Bessie Averna
... The social survey, by Bessie A. McClenahan. (Iowa City, Ia., The University [1916]
(22) p. 224^{cm}. (The State university of Iowa, Iowa City. Extension division bulletin, no. 26)
On cover: University of Iowa extension bulletin. 1st ser., no. 7. Dec. 1, 1916. Bulletin no. 26.

1. Social surveys. 2. Charities—Iowa.

Library of Congress  HV98.I8M3 17-27168
ONLY ED

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FILM SIZE: 35mm

REDUCTION RATIO: 10:1

IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 4-4-97

INITIALS: RB

TRACKING # : 23357

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BIBLIOGRAPHIC IRREGULARITIES

MAIN ENTRY: McClenahan, Bessie Avera

The social survey

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Dec 12 / 362
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UNIVERSITY OF IOWA EXTENSION BULLETIN

First Series, No. 7

December 1, 1916

BULLETIN NO. 26



THE SOCIAL SURVEY

by

BESSIE A. McCLENAHAN

PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY
IOWA CITY, IOWA

ISSUED SEMI-MONTHLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. ENTERED AT
THE POST OFFICE IN IOWA CITY AS SECOND CLASS MAIL MATTER

THE STATE
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
IOWA CITY

Extension Division Bulletin No. 26
O. E. KLINGAMAN, M. A., Editor



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THE BUREAU OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Since its inception in 1913 the Bureau of Social Welfare has been occupied with the task of discovering what the specific social problems of the state, the counties, and the towns of Iowa are, and the best means of meeting these problems. The term "social welfare" has been given a broad meaning so as to include not merely the problem of the dependent, the defective, and the delinquent, but also recreation, child welfare, the development of community spirit, the work of women's clubs—in short whatever makes for better social adjustment in the community.

The Bureau of Social Welfare does not force its services upon the community. Service is rendered only upon invitation by a responsible local organization, and the organization extending this invitation is expected to meet the traveling expenses from and to Iowa City and the expenses of the Bureau's representative in the town. The work is varied. Lectures on social welfare have been given; community institutes have been held; social surveys have been made; and advice has been given to local organizations as to improved methods of conducting their welfare work. A child welfare exhibit prepared by the Bureau has been widely used at county fairs and by different clubs, especially in connection with baby health contests. Also, in response to a strong demand from the women's clubs, the Bureau, in co-operation with other departments, has devised a plan for child welfare surveys.

O. E. KLINGAMAN,
Director of the Extension Division.

THE SOCIAL SURVEY

The state of Iowa is different in so many respects from those states in which modern welfare work started, and its cities, counties, and towns differ so much from each other as to make a careful general collection and study of facts necessary before definite advice can be given and scientific work started. The survey gives a correct foundation on which definite plans for community betterment can be built. No arbitrary plan, or the plans successful in other cities, will necessarily be suited to a particular Iowa community; the plan must correlate the local social needs with the local social resources; the community as a whole must be studied and the different social problems must be seen not as unrelated and isolated facts but as parts of the one problem.

A social survey is simply a study of the individual town to learn its social conditions. Such a study should be the first step in community welfare work; the second step is to outline a plan of work for the future; and the third is to carry out this plan through the co-operative effort of the people of the community. Any plan presented will fail unless the community supports it with enthusiasm. In fact the impetus which makes plans for social welfare successful must come from within the community.

The social data compiled deal with the people, their nationality, living conditions, occupations, incomes and expenses; their facilities for recreation, sanitation and conditions of general health. The Bureau undertakes to find out something of the conditions of child life; the amount of juvenile delinquency; and the provisions made for neglected, dependent, and delinquent children. It endeavors to learn something of the degree and kind of adult delinquency, the number of families more or less dependent, the amount expended for their care by public and private relief agencies, and efforts made to assist them in returning to self-support. The organized agencies of social service

are studied also to ascertain whether they meet the local needs and the extent to which their activities overlap.

The success of the survey depends, of course, upon the degree to which the business and social agencies in the community co-operate with the Bureau's worker, and special effort is made to secure this co-operation. All the different social welfare agencies and the public officials are approached. News articles are given to the press, and meetings of different kinds are addressed with the object of strengthening the appreciation of the survey and for a community plan, and the enthusiasm for them. Different groups of people with varying ideas are brought together on the common purpose.

THE PROBLEMS OF RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

As is generally known, Iowa has long had a state-wide system of county poor relief divided into two general divisions: *indoor relief*, or care in the county home, and *outdoor relief*, or care of the poor in their own homes. In addition to the usual outdoor poor relief, which unfortunately is still spoken of in county financial reports as care of "paupers outside of County Farm," there are three other forms of relief which are not ordinarily thought of as poor relief: *Soldiers' Relief*, which is provided for by a special county tax; *Widows' Pensions*, which are paid from the regular county funds; and *County Aid to the Blind*, also paid from the county fund, as provided by the legislature in 1915.

There is a law providing that cities of the first class and those under special charter may establish and maintain an infirmary for the accommodation of the dependent poor of the city and may raise funds for the distribution of outdoor relief, but so far as is known, no Iowa city has taken advantage of the powers granted under this law, and wisely so, since every county has a poor fund which is available for its cities. The raising of a separate city fund would be an unnecessary duplication and would complicate the administration of poor relief.

The relief of needy families is a large, ever-present problem of social welfare, the extent of which is not generally realized, and because of its relative importance the Bureau of Social Welfare has been giving special attention to it. An inquiry made at the

beginning of the year 1914 disclosed the fact that over \$1,000,000 had been spent in the preceding year by the Iowa counties for public relief; that almost nothing of this immense sum was devoted to constructive work; and that the actual needs of the poor were not always cared for so thoroughly as this large total might suggest. Of the sum mentioned approximately \$345,000 was expended for relief in the county homes, and the current expense for regular outdoor relief in 97 counties was over \$561,000.

Indoor Relief

Of the 99 counties in Iowa only two have no county homes, and in these two counties the dependents who would normally be admitted to the county home, are cared for by "boarding out" or by contracting for their support. In addition to the current expense for indoor relief noted above, the 97 counties have an investment in county homes of not less than \$4,000,000, which includes the value of approximately 20,000 acres of farm land. The report of the State Board of Control for the year 1914 stated that in 95 of the counties 2576 persons were receiving indoor relief.

In addition to caring for the aged and infirm poor at the county home, most of the counties maintain a ward or hospital for the incurable insane who may be transferred from the state hospital. The cost of these wards is included in the general cost of the county home.

Outdoor Relief

The "poor fund," raised by taxation under the jurisdiction of the local board of supervisors, is found in every county. In the towns it is dispensed by an overseer of the poor appointed by the board of supervisors, and in the rural districts by the township trustees. The amount expended for outdoor relief (or what is commonly known as the "pauper fund") in 97 counties in 1913, has been given above, but no statistics are available to show the number of families, or the number of persons, to whom this relief was extended.

The Bureau endeavored by means of a questionnaire to obtain some data on the methods of administration, and the replies indicated that scientific methods were not in general use. To

the question, "What length of residence is required for eligibility for county relief?" the replies show that it varies from sixty days to a year. Transients, however, are treated somewhat uniformly, temporary aid, notice to leave the county, and attempts to collect aid from the home county being the usual program. As to transportation, the unwise practice of "shipping-on" is still much in evidence. Many replies read: "Pass along to next county seat;" "Get them out the best way we can and charge expense to home county;" "Give transportation if it will rid county of them;" "Buy ticket and ship them on towards home;" "Give ticket to next county seat in direction they want to go;" "Transportation is a saving in many cases." Some counties limit transportation to women, old men, the sick, or the crippled. Only a few counties refuse transportation until adequate investigation can be made. The method in these counties is to communicate with responsible persons at the desired destination and to purchase transportation to that point if evidence is forthcoming that the applicant has residence there and will be cared for.

The majority of counties keep practically no family data, such as names of all members of the dependent family, ages, accurate addresses, rent paid, occupation, and income and resources. Usually the name of the head of the family is secured, occasionally the number of children, perhaps the income, ordinarily the address (which is not always definite), sometimes the amount of rent paid. In most counties the only records of relief consist of the ledger accounts and stubs of the order blanks. A few counties have a good card system, and in these the system can usually be traced to the immediate influence of organized charity methods. Some counties still print the list of families aided. Usually bulk orders for merchandise or fuel are given, and little effort is made to help the family in purchasing supplies. The salaries of overseers are often only nominal. For the most part, the need for trained workers as overseers of the poor apparently has not been felt. The county boards of supervisors are realizing, however, that some better system is necessary if thorough investigation, "follow-up" work, co-operation of county and private relief and centralization of administration are to be brought about.

The administration in force is characterized frequently by a lack of complete records, of trained officials, of thorough investigation, and of "follow-up" work with the families. The resultant waste of public money, the pauperizing of families, and the lack of constructive effort to rehabilitate families now dependent, constitute a serious social problem. Careful business methods of book-keeping, accounting and management should be exercised no less in giving relief to the needy poor than in the conduct of business.

Soldiers' Relief

No soldier, soldier's widow, or family may be sent to the county home in Iowa when they can and prefer to be relieved outside.* To care for this class of our citizens when aid of some kind is necessary, a special tax up to one-half mill may be levied. The fund so obtained is administered by a Soldiers' Relief Commission consisting of three commissioners who are appointed by the county board of supervisors, two of whom must be honorably discharged union soldiers, sailors, or marines. The relief may consist of cash grants (usually a monthly allowance), transportation (especially to the Soldiers' Home at Marshalltown), and burial expenses and markers for the graves. The Soldiers' Relief Commissions in 94 counties expended \$159,410.20 in 1913.

Widows' Pensions

The law creating widows' pensions, providing a maximum of two dollars a week for each child under fourteen years of age, went into effect on July 4, 1913. The pensions are granted by the Judge of the Juvenile Court (which may be either the District or the Superior Court) and are paid by the local board of supervisors. In some counties the pension is paid from the juvenile fund, in others from the poor fund, and in others from a special fund set apart for that purpose. Before securing a pension a widow must file a petition and prove by testimony that she is in needy circumstances.†

*Code of Iowa; Section 2231.

†By the provisions of the law women whose husbands are in any of the state institutions under the Board of Control, are considered widows and are eligible for pensions.

Widows' pensions are based upon the theory, now generally accepted, that the home is the best place for the child, and that poverty should not deprive any child of a home and the care by its mother. Many feel, however, that the law as it now stands does not make sufficient provision for investigation and for supervision of the family after the pension is granted. It has been doubted whether the pensions are adequate, and whether the mother is enabled to stay at home more than formerly. Regularly appointed and paid probation officers for the juvenile court are provided by law only in counties of 50,000 or more inhabitants. In the seven counties of this size the probation officers make the investigations of applications for widows' pensions, and in the other counties the county attorney, and occasionally the overseer of the poor, assists the judge in this work.

Although widows' pensions are considered as distinct from poor relief, they demand methods of investigation, disbursement, and supervision similar to those employed in well-managed relief work. After the pension has been granted under proper investigation, supervision is necessary to insure that the pension be adequate to the specific needs and that it be efficiently expended.

Complete figures for widows' pensions are not available, but the amount is increasing rapidly, as the law becomes better known. In some counties widows who have been recipients of county aid, obtain widows' pensions, and county aid is then discontinued. Polk County, the county of largest population in the state, expended \$11,582.51 for widows' pensions in 1915.

County Aid to the Blind

In 1915 the General Assembly of Iowa passed a bill providing pensions for the blind. By this law all males over twenty-one years of age, and all females over eighteen years of age, who are blind, may be granted county aid of \$150.00 a year, to be paid quarterly after a medical examination and a statement from two witnesses that the applicant has been a resident of the state for five years and of the county for one year. No aid may be granted, however, if the applicant has an income of \$300 a year or more. The clerk of the county receives the necessary

affidavits, the physician's report, and a statement of the witnesses, and transmits these to the board of supervisors. There is no provision for further investigation or supervision.

THE COMBINATION PLAN

In recent years the inefficiency of much of the relief work carried on in the community has been increasingly apparent to those who have given some attention to their community problems. Business men are constantly solicited for support for charities of different kinds, and usually they have little means of knowing whether the cause is a deserving one, or, if the project merits their help, whether the contributions will be adequate to the need and efficiently used. Certain families are helped from both public and private sources, and dependency is thereby encouraged. Comparatively little effort is made to secure employment for the applicants for relief, to assist those who are ill to return to a condition in which self-support is possible, to enlist the aid of relatives, or to co-ordinate closely the work of the different agencies giving aid. An extensive duplication of the public and the private relief given by individuals, churches, lodges and relief societies, has been the outcome, with the consequent waste of time, energy, and money, and the frequent loss of sympathy on the part of the individuals extending the aid.

When a change of method is desired, however, a serious practical difficulty arises. A trained worker is needed in the public and in the private relief work, but the smaller community cannot afford to employ two of these workers: that is, it cannot pay taxes levied by the county board of supervisors for the county relief fund, including the salary of a trained public relief official, and, at the same time, support by means of personal contributions a private relief fund and a trained welfare worker.

The Bureau of Social Welfare has been recommending as the solution a plan for combining the public and the private agencies with specific adaptations for each community to which it has been called for consultation. Although there have been combination agreements in other parts of the United States, this adjustment of the combination plan to the local conditions makes the method distinctive. There are a few cities in Iowa, perhaps, in which

a close combination, or co-ordination, of public and private forces is not feasible at this time, and in such cities a substitute plan should be devised to conserve the relief funds as much as possible and to insure more protection of the best interests of the needy families. Wherever the combination of public and private relief funds in the hands of a trained worker, acting as overseer of the poor and as secretary of an associated charities, has been inaugurated, it has met with success. The combination plan is still so recent, however, as to be in the experimental stage, and its limitations as well as its possibilities have probably not been completely revealed.

The trained social worker, made possible under the combination plan, need not be confined to work of relief among the poor. Especially in the smaller cities, which cannot have separate organizations for their various social activities, this worker is of great value as an organizer and leader in these other movements for social development.

CITY SURVEYS MADE

The Bureau of Social Welfare has conducted "path-finding surveys" in eight cities, and on the basis of the local needs and resources so determined has suggested a plan by which the particular city might meet its general social needs as well as the special relief problems. During the year 1914-1915 Ottumwa, Burlington, Sioux City, and Muscatine were thus surveyed; during the year 1915-1916, Davenport, Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids, and Charles City.

Ottumwa

In July, 1914, the Commercial Club of Ottumwa asked for a brief survey. The study was made, a publicity campaign was carried on, and all the local social agencies were interviewed for the purpose of enlisting their co-operation. The campaign was concluded with a general meeting at the rooms of the Commercial Club and at this meeting a full report of the conditions found was given and specific recommendations were made. The report was adopted and a board of directors was elected with members not only from Ottumwa but from nearby towns also. The name chosen for the new organi-

zation was The Associated Charities of Wapello County.* An annual budget of \$5,000 was decided on, part of which was to be used for an emergency relief fund and the balance for the employment of a trained social worker and other administrative expenses. In addition to the relief department an employment exchange was planned in conjunction with a joint registration bureau, at which all the agencies might register in a confidential file the names of the families aided by them and so prevent duplication of effort. Attention was to be given to the problem of neglected, dependent, and delinquent children, and the office was equipped to serve as a center to which all families and individuals soliciting aid might be sent.

The new organization was designed also as a central office, through which homeless men might secure work to pay for their lodging and meals if they were able-bodied, and through which, if they were ill, they might be taken care of and given medical aid, until their family or place of residence could be learned.

The survey showed that Ottumwa, a city of approximately 23,000 people, had expended in one year no less than \$25,000 for its needy poor, and a conservative estimate, based upon the returns from the different societies, placed the number of families aided either continuously or intermittently at 300, or about 1500 individuals. It was found that physical needs were not properly investigated, nor was insistence placed upon the need for physical examination and adherence to some plan for return to health. The following items are quoted from the report of the survey:

"A study of the data secured relative to family conditions leads to some very definite conclusions which were substantiated by the experience of Ottumwa charity workers.

1. There has been considerable duplication.
2. Investigation has too often been superficial. The family's story has been taken at face value. Little effort has been made to get at the root cause of the family's condition.
3. As a result, relief has been too easily obtained.
4. There has been no systematic keeping of records. It was difficult to get definite information about the families. Sometimes all that was secured was the name and address. Sometimes

*The name has since been changed to The Social Service Bureau of Wapello County.

only the name was learned. The Overseer of the Poor has a complete list of all families assisted and some relative data. Each society, of course, keeps an account of the expenditures. Few have gone farther than that.

5. Very little follow-up work has been done. Too often effort has ceased with the supplying of clothing, groceries, or coal. The possibility of making the family self-supporting and an active factor in the economic well-being of the city, has been frequently ignored.

6. The women seem to have made the applications for relief, and children have been permitted to ask for supplies. This is a very serious condition. Children learn quickly the lessons of poverty, and they easily develop into first-class beggars if care is not taken. On the other hand if the man is able-bodied and not working, he should be the one to ask for assistance. The responsibility of the family is his, and he should be forced to assume it."

In addition to the recommendations for the creation of an Associated Charities with trained workers, a confidential exchange to be used by all agencies having to do with relief of needy families, an employment bureau, the adequate care of the homeless man, and an anti-tuberculosis campaign were advised.

The Associated Charities of Wapello County was organized on September 15, 1914. An indication of the hold which the movement had taken in the community, is seen in the fact that over \$4,000 of the \$5,000 budget was pledged before the office was opened. Very soon after the new secretary took her office, two judges of the District Court issued an order making the secretary official investigator of all widows' pension cases. On March 1, 1915, the secretary was appointed overseer of the poor by the county board of supervisors. Since October, 1915, the county has paid part of the secretary's salary as overseer of the poor and part of the overhead expenses. This centralization has brought private relief, county relief, the investigation of widows' pension cases, in fact the whole relief work of the community under the Central Board. The society has also co-operated with other civic bodies in "clean-up" and anti-tuberculosis campaigns. An important part of its work for some time will be the demonstration of the value to the community of constructive family work.

Burlington

A similar social survey was made at Burlington in February, 1915, at the request of the Commercial Exchange. The local charity organization society went out of existence in September, 1914, but during the winter months, the city was forced to recognize its loss and to set about securing another central organization. After the local situation had been studied, representatives of all the social service agencies were called together to consider a plan. A brief survey was made, the data for which were secured by volunteer workers. These included housing, rents paid, health and sanitation, occupations, incomes, recreation, and general living conditions.

The Social Service League was organized with a board composed of representatives of the federated societies. Each of these societies agreed to discontinue the giving of relief and to turn all applications over to the Social Service League. The Burlington Relief Society and the Visiting Nurse Association were merged into the League; a central registration bureau with a confidential file system was established; and in the one office were housed the general secretary (who acts also as truant officer, appointed by the school board), the visiting nurse, the school nurse, and the county relief agent (overseer of the poor). The Social Service League will be not only the center for the administration of public and private relief but also a center through which other needed social movements may be initiated.

Sioux City

In February, 1915, the Commercial Club of Sioux City requested a survey of the relief conditions in that city. It was found that the overseer of the poor had no system of case records. Carbon copies of the orders issued were the only memoranda kept, these being supplemented, of course, by the county auditor's record of bills paid by the county for poor relief. Since the survey was made, however, the county has installed a good card system. Woodbury county in which Sioux City is located, has subsidized several semi-public institutions, maintained a county home, and built a tuberculosis hospital.

The survey revealed considerable overlapping of public and

private agencies, no common understanding as to the field of work to be covered by each, and a great need for careful investigation of county wards and for constructive plans for their care. It was recommended that the preliminary study should be followed by a "case" survey: that is, a study of all county cases in order that a more definite basis might be secured for a comprehensive plan of reorganization of the relief methods. A suggested plan was included in the report submitted to the president of the Commercial Club. As a result the county board of supervisors employed a trained worker to make this case study. This effort on the part of a county board is especially significant in that it sets a new standard for county officials throughout the state.

Muscatine

The fourth survey was made in Muscatine, one of the oldest cities in the state, with a population of nearly 17,000. Interested citizens there had organized the Muscatine Welfare Association on the plan of an organized charities. The executive board of this association asked for a survey which would outline effective methods for serving the community. The plan prepared after the survey was made, embraced the scientific distribution of private relief funds, the installation of modern case records, the employment of a trained social worker, the handling of truancy work of the public schools (the truant officer to serve as superintendent of the Association), and general constructive work with dependent families. It was advised that an effort should be made to include under the Association the probation work of the Juvenile Court. The advantages of combining public and private relief were pointed out, and the hope was expressed that the effectiveness of the work done by the Association would be such as to lead to the appointment of the secretary as overseer of the poor.

The plan recommended was adopted, and the work has developed in the direction suggested. A trained worker was employed, and in the fall of 1916 a visiting nurse was added to the staff under the control of a Public Health Bureau which was organized by the Board of the Association. The Board of the Association is composed of representatives of churches, lodges,

commercial and civic organizations, the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., and of certain city and county officials. Its office is serving as the center for the relief work of the community.

As must necessarily be true in the smaller cities, the work of the Muscatine Welfare Association is not limited to the administration of relief funds but includes the promotion and direction of other city activities. In the spring of 1916 a child welfare week was conducted. The secretary is working constantly with neglected, dependent, and delinquent children, and is frequently called upon to take charge of wards of the Juvenile Court.

Davenport

The recommendations made as a result of the survey covered in general certain methods for increasing the effectiveness of the Confidential Exchange and for improving the administration of the county relief. The specific recommendations were as follows:

"The Confidential Exchange reports to each agency that registers its cases whether or not any other society is already interested in the particular case. Through the Confidential Exchange the county officers can know whether any families receiving county aid are also applying to other agencies. If duplication is discovered, the secretaries of the private agencies and the county Overseer of the Poor can decide in conference what steps should be taken. Furthermore definite policies for both the private and the public agencies should be outlined. For this purpose a Charities Council might be formed consisting of representatives from each organization, the Overseer of the Poor, and a member of the Board of Supervisors. Such a council would be able to pass upon the general policies and to insure a common understanding and co-operation among the different agencies.

"To make the Confidential Exchange more effective the truant or school attendance officer and the probation officer should register there all cases coming to their attention. Frequently the same family comes under the observation of the truant officer, the probation officer, and the county.

"The Ladies' Industrial Relief Society is, perhaps, the largest private relief giving agency. It would seem possible for the county to agree to care for one kind of cases and for the Ladies' Industrial Relief Society to care for another. For example, the county might take the cases needing continuous relief and, on the other hand, this society might care for all cases applying for

the first time, in other words, those who have never been on the county books and who need aid only for a short period.

"The county should have a complete system of case records; it should investigate more thoroughly the families applying for aid and provide for more frequent visiting after aid has been granted; it should make definite efforts to re-establish families on a self-supporting basis; it should instruct the women how to buy and in co-operation with the court it should adopt the plan of asking for accounts of income and expenses from widows' pension cases; it should work with other agencies interested in dependent families; and it should give the Overseer of the Poor more authority in the poor relief work. To carry out these policies the Board of Supervisors should appoint a trained welfare worker as overseer of the poor, one who has had experience and training in working with dependent families and in meeting the different individual problems as they arise."

This report was prepared at the request of the Davenport Commercial Club and met with its approval.

Council Bluffs

The survey in Council Bluffs was carried on under the auspices of the Commercial Club of that city, and specific recommendations were made as follows:

"In making our recommendations we are not proposing any radical changes; rather we are urging the completion of the plan which you have already begun. To meet the present needs in Council Bluffs we would respectfully recommend that the work of the Creche and that of the central office be separated. The central office could be established as an independent organization under a new board which might organize a Social Service League. This league could use the central office as a beginning and develop its work by installing an up-to-date record system and by employing a trained welfare worker as secretary. Such a plan would leave the Associated Charities free to devote itself to the work of the Creche and its other activities.

"The Social Service League should work in close co-operation with the Overseer of the Poor. Its services in making investigations should always be available to the county officers and it should render such valuable assistance to the county that eventually an actual combination of the poor relief offices will be possible. It is recommended that the Commercial Club and the Retail Dealers' Association co-operate with the Social Service League, if one is organized, by insisting that the different societies seeking contributions use and support the registration

bureau or confidential exchange in the office of the Social Service League."

Cedar Rapids

The invitation to make the survey at Cedar Rapids came through the secretary of the Commercial Club, after a motion proposing such invitation had been passed by the Board of the Sunshine Mission, which is the largest private relief agency of that city. The survey occupied nearly five weeks, and the expenses were met by the county Board of Supervisors. Consequently the Commercial Club, the Sunshine Mission, and the Board of Supervisors were responsible jointly for the survey. A large amount of data was secured through the co-operation of the several societies, families were visited, welfare workers were interviewed, and the poor relief methods in general were studied. A series of charts tabulating much of the material gathered was prepared by volunteers. It was found that from September, 1915, to February, 1916, a period of five months, 595 families had received aid, and that no less than \$30,000 had been expended by private agencies and the county for the relief of families in their homes. Previous to the public meeting at which the report was given, the Board of the Sunshine Mission had recommended the plan for federating all the poor relief activity of Cedar Rapids, as outlined in the report; the Board of Directors of the Commercial Club had endorsed it; the United Charities Campaign Committee which would be responsible for raising the budget, had approved it; and the Board of Supervisors had expressed a desire to co-operate. This report included the following statements and recommendations:

"The problem in Cedar Rapids is to co-ordinate the poor relief efforts of the city and to reduce the number of families who are recipients of aid, by restoring as many as possible to self-support.

"In every city there are many men and women who wish to do what they can to assist those who are unfortunate. They wish to be truly helpful but the difficulty is that they do not always know what to do or how aid should be given. This volunteer service is one of the splendid resources of Cedar Rapids which has scarcely been touched.

"On the basis of conditions found the Bureau of Social Welfare would respectfully recommend: (1) the creation of a central agency to be called the Social Welfare Board or Social

Service League, under the direction of a board of business men and women representative of the various interests in Cedar Rapids; (2) the employment of a trained charity worker as secretary of this central agency with sufficient helpers to make the plan effective; (3) the employment of a visiting nurse for the education and care of the sick in their homes; (4) the installation of a complete and up-to-date filing system for case records; (5) the establishment of a confidential exchange in which may be registered confidentially the names of all families and individuals receiving aid from societies, churches, public officials, or individuals; (6) the turning over of its charity work among families, by the Sunshine Mission to the central office; (7) the development of a central employment agency at the Sunshine Mission; (8) the county Board of Supervisors to be members *ex-officio* of the central board and to handle the county relief work through the central office; (9) the adoption by business men of a policy of making the registration at the central office of all cases, a condition of endorsement of any society and of referring all those applying for aid to the central office."

A committee was appointed to investigate the details of the plan and to report at another meeting to be held a week later. This committee after conferring with the Board of Supervisors and the Commercial Club, recommended in detail the combination plan suggested in the original report. Their recommendation was accepted and the Board of the Social Welfare League elected. This Board then organized, chose its officers, and employed a trained social worker who is now carrying on the work of the League and acting as overseer of the poor.

Charles City

This survey was conducted under the auspices of the Social Service League, and the resulting report, presented at a mass meeting of the citizens, carried the following recommendations:

"On the basis of local conditions and needs we would respectfully recommend the following specific social program for Charles City:

"(1) The scope of the Social Service League should be enlarged so as to make the League a center for all the social welfare activity of the town. The League is non-sectarian, non-partisan, and representative of all the different local interests. The canvass of the city shows that with churches, clubs of several kinds, social welfare organizations such as the Associated Charities, the Y. M. C. A., the Child Welfare Association, and the

Parent-Teacher Associations, and lodges, there are no less than 58 different organized groups. If real community activity is to be developed, there must be a center through which these many agencies may act. The Social Service League is the logical agency.

"(2) To make the work efficient a trained social worker is necessary. She would act as the secretary of the League and in that capacity handle the private relief funds, visit dependent families, make investigations, give relief at once where needed, secure employment for the unemployed, insist upon self-support when possible, and organize such constructive work among dependent families as would help to reduce the number of families requiring material relief. She should be given police authority as an aid in looking after delinquent girls and in protecting both boys and girls on the streets and in other public places. The worker would not be regarded as a detective or an officer to be feared and shunned; rather she would be a helpful friend and the police authority given her would supply the needed influence when she is dealing with a situation in which her authority is questioned. She might well serve as a regularly appointed truant officer for the public schools.....

"(3) The county and private relief work should be combined and the secretary or social worker appointed as overseer of the poor. This plan would centralize all the relief efforts of the city and would give the county the services of a trained poor relief worker. It would not be an experiment. Five Iowa cities have the combination plan and are more than satisfied with the results. A sixth has recently adopted it. The secretary might also investigate the widows' pension cases and do follow-up work after the pension is granted, helping to plan the expenditures and in general looking after the welfare of the children."

A trained worker has since been employed, and she is acting as a general community welfare secretary. She has, for instance, managed the Christmas giving and is organizing a mothers' club, a girls' club, and a volunteer group of friendly visitors.

THE VALUE OF ORGANIZED SOCIAL SERVICE

A definite plan providing for trained workers and organized social service prevents waste and insures efficiency. It means that, to a degree seldom attained otherwise, each dollar will be placed where it will do the most good. Although money has been saved and the amount of relief reduced, a record of a small amount of money expended for relief does not necessarily

indicate efficiency of administration. It is no criterion of the work. A plan of relief which cares for the needs of the dependent, which makes at the same time an effort to learn the cause, and which provides for the removal of this cause, is the desired objective.

Every citizen of the community is interested in constructive efforts for the needy poor such as will relieve their distress and, at the same time, enable them, if possible, to return to self-support. Co-operation between the private relief agencies and the county officials is an important step toward this end. It insures greater economy of administration and greater efficiency in constructive work.

The "Iowa Plan" of combining all social forces under a central board of citizens with the county officials as members *ex officio*, can be adjusted to meet the needs of any locality whether city, town, or rural district. The full plan need not be adopted at once but a beginning can be made with a simple private organization, which may assume eventually the duties of the public officials, as has been the experience at Ottumwa. It insures better protection for the dependent and delinquent children, makes the rehabilitation of dependent families its chief objective, and protects the tax-payers through its efficiency.

The great service which the "combination plan" renders to Iowa towns, is constructive work with the dependent families. This is the reason for recommending that a trained charity worker should be overseer of the poor and that this office should be combined with the secretaryship of the central organization whenever possible. It gives the worker an official position, makes possible the harmonizing of the many divergent interests of the community, opens up the way for investigation and supervision of widows' pension cases, retains the advantage of having a fund raised by private contributions for temporary cases, and creates a board of private citizens who serve without pay and who direct the policy of the social work in the community. The members of the county board of supervisors, of course, are necessarily members *ex officio* of this board. County funds and private funds are kept separate as are the records of families aided by each. The secretary, as overseer of the poor, is directly responsible to the board of supervisors for the expenditure of

county funds and regularly submits a formal report to them in addition to the reports submitted to the central board on all the activities of the office.

The development of the plan suggested points logically to a county-wide plan for the control of relief administration, inasmuch as the relief funds are county funds, but the state as a whole is probably not yet ready for a law providing county welfare boards to control the expenditure of these county funds. The general social conditions vary considerably in the different counties. One Iowa county has a population under 10,000; 57 counties have between 10,000 and 20,000; 26 have from 20,000 to 30,000; 8 have from 30,000 to 50,000; and only 7 have 50,000 or more. In some of these counties there is a great variety of social interests and efforts; in others there is little, and in these it would probably be advisable for each large community to continue to work out its own plan and to extend its influence and work to the smaller centers of the county as rapidly as possible. If any changes are made in the different counties, they should be made only after a definite study of local conditions, and the plan eventually adopted should be based upon the facts so obtained.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STATE-WIDE ACTIVITY

A few suggestions for further state-wide activity in the field of poor relief may not be out of place in this discussion:

1. The Iowa poor laws should be recodified and the obsolete sections of it revised to conform to modern conditions. The law, for instance, providing a wage of five cents an hour for work on the highways performed by applicants for poor relief, should be replaced by one providing the normal wage for the work of able-bodied men with families, temporarily unemployed. The present law limiting the amount of relief, other than medical attention, to \$2.00 a week for each person obviously fails to provide sufficient relief in many cases at the present time.

2. The use of the term "pauper" should be eliminated from the statutes and from all county reports or documents, to conform with modern terminology. There is a precedent for such a change in the act of the legislature in 1909, which changes county "poor house" to county "home."

3. The present law giving to township trustees the power to act as overseers of the poor in the rural districts might well be amended to the extent of giving the county board of supervisors authority to appoint a county overseer of the poor and the necessary assistants, who would take over the work now under these trustees. Such a change would make possible the employment of trained workers in all counties, even in the smallest in population.

4. The office of a State Commissioner of Charities might be created, under appointment by the State Board of Control. This Commissioner could require uniform reports of county relief from each county overseer of the poor, and he should have authority to standardize records and to establish methods of work designed to promote efficiency in administration. Eventually this office might be developed into a State Charities Commission having supervisory power over and authority to compel standardization of the work in children's homes and child-placing agencies, in county homes, and in all outdoor relief. This latter step, however, is somewhat in the future, and the development of the local charities in the state will reveal the extent of the need for it.

5. A state-wide social survey should be made. This survey would supply exact information of general conditions in this field and might serve as a basis for more radical measures than public opinion would support at the present time. To make needed changes in the laws public opinion must be aroused and probably no better way could be found to enlist public opinion than through the publicity growing out of a state-wide social survey.

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